**Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," *North American Review* CCCXCI (June,1889)**

*Andrew Carnegie’s life is the classic “rags-to-riches” story. Born in Scotland, Carnegie came to the United States as a teenager. His first job was in a textile factory. By the end of the Civil War, however, he was on his way to becoming the leader of the U.S. steel industry and the richest man in the world. Despite his success, however, Carnegie did not believe in simply amassing wealth. Rather, he felt that wealth should be used to improve society, not through “hand-outs,” but through socially conscious investments. In his lifetime he gave away approximately $350 million, a large portion of which was used to establish more than 2500 libraries and several institutes of higher learning. The Carnegie Corporation, along with a number of endowments, continues to operate today and funds a huge array of grants and other endeavors. The passage below is Carnegie’s struggle to justify the different facets of his personality.*

The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the swelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. The Indians are today where civilized man then was. When visiting the Sioux, I was led to the wigwam of the chief. It was just like the others in external appearance, and even within the difference was trifling between it and those of the poorest of his braves. The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change which has come with civilization.

This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, nay, essential for the progress of the race, that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization, rather than that none should be so. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor. Without wealth there can be no Maecenas. The "good old times" were not good old times. Neither master nor servant was as well situated then as to-day. A relapse to old conditions would be disastrous to both -- not the least so to him who serves -- and would sweep away civilization with it. But whether the change be for good or ill, it is upon us, beyond our power to alter, and therefore to be accepted and made the best of. It is waste of time to criticize the inevitable.

…We assemble thousands of operatives in the factory, in the mine, and in the counting-house, of whom the employer can know little or nothing, and to whom the employer is little better than a myth. All intercourse between them is at an end. Rigid Castes are formed, and, as, usual, mutual ignorance breeds mutual distrust. Each Caste is without sympathy for the other, and ready to credit anything disparaging in regard to it. Under the law of competition, the employer of thousands is forced into the strictest economies, among which the rates paid to labor figure prominently, and often there is friction between the employer and the employed, between capital and labor, between rich and poor. Human society loses homogeneity.

The price which society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great; but the advantages of this law are also greater still, for it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development, which brings improved conditions in its train.

…This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of Wealth: First, to set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and after doing so to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community -- the man of wealth thus becoming the mere agent and trustee for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.

**Document Analysis**

1. Whom does Carnegie seem to be trying to persuade?
2. How does Carnegie portray the role of inequality in an industrial society?
3. Today, would Carnegie be more likely to identify with the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?